

AN ALPINE TRAGEDY.

Thrilling Story of a Fall Down the Matterhorn.

"One of the most thrilling stories in Alpine history is that of Mr. Sloggett's fall on the Matterhorn," writes Aubrey Le Blond. "With two Zermatt guides—Alphons Furrer and Augustin Gentinetta—this young Englishman had made a quick ascent of the mountain and was a long way down on the return journey. At one spot it is necessary to cross a couloir, or gully of snow and ice, and down this channel fall most of the stones that detach themselves from the shattered face of the peak. The leading guide, Furrer, was making his way over when a stone, dropping from a considerable height, struck him full on the head and instantly killed him. The two others, attached by their rope to his dead body, were unable in their precarious foothold to resist the shock and were immediately swept away down the couloir at terrific speed. Their axes were torn from their grasp, and Gentinetta, who never lost consciousness, was convinced that death must await them at the end of that awful journey, but this man of iron nerve kept his presence of mind and showed what a stout heart and a keen intelligence can do even in the most desperate situation.

"About 800 feet below the spot where the party were carried off a small bergschrund or crevasse ran across the ice slope which forms the base of the Matterhorn on its eastern side. This crevasse is not always open—in fact, in October, 1903, when I went on to the mountain to photograph the scene of this accident, it did not exist at all. Beneath it are ice cliffs, and any one shooting the crevasse and falling over these would have a sheer drop which must immediately be fatal, but in Mr. Sloggett's case the crack was several feet wide and into it the two still living men and their dead companion were precipitated. The chasm was partly filled with stones and sand, and Mr. Sloggett fell face down. Gentinetta, though terribly bruised, without an instant's delay seized the helpless form of his employer, pulled him out of the position in which he lay, almost suffocating, and cleared the sand out of his throat and eyes.

"His jaw was broken, and his bruises were even worse than those of Gentinetta, but no other bones were broken. The disaster was already bad enough, but at any moment an even more terrible catastrophe threatened the two poor wounded men in the crevasse. The couloir was, as I have said, a natural channel for falling stones, and it was just the hottest hour of the day, when the snow was thawing fast and loosening from its fetters the missiles it had earlier held fast frozen to the mountain. It was imperative to lose no time in waiting for assistance from the other parties who were on the Matterhorn. So the guide and the Englishman, without axes, bruised, shaken and weak, started on the desperate task of climbing back up that glassy, blood stained wall, a task hard enough even for an uninjured and fully equipped party.

"How it was accomplished Gentinetta declares he does not know, but by an extraordinary display of pluck and skill the two at length reached their old tracks and gained a place of safety. Assistance was now at hand, and with the help of the other parties the wounded men eventually arrived at the Schwarzsee hotel. Though laid up for many weeks after, both in the end made an excellent recovery. Poor Furrer's body was with much difficulty brought down next day from the crevasse."

A Rose of War. It is not always policy to acknowledge a defeat. A little coolness at the critical moment sometimes saves the day, as in the case described in Mr. Ripley's "Story of Company F." In a close encounter during the civil war two soldiers, one from each army, came face to face within short range. Each put up his gun and fired, as it subsequently appeared, his last cartridge. Both missed. The bullet of one man buried itself in a tree, and the shot of the other passed through the coat of his enemy. Each man, knowing his ammunition was gone, supposed himself to be at a disadvantage. One of them made a great show of reloading his gun, and, stepping forward, demanded a surrender. The other threw down his arms with a groan.

"If I had another cartridge, I would never surrender!" he exclaimed. "That's all right," calmly remarked the captor, marching off his prisoner. "If I had another, you may be sure I shouldn't have asked you to surrender."

The Ignorant Egyptian Women. It is difficult for English women to realize the blankness of mind resulting from the seclusion of women. It is true of most that they have never even seen a book and rarely an Arabic newspaper. Practically none can read. They have not even picture books. Anything like serious conversation is unknown. They can talk about their babies or their trinkets, but nothing else. Their needlework is mechanical embroidery. They cannot make their own clothes. They know nothing of what is passing in the outer world, nor do they even realize that there is an outer world. In the country the peasant women are not secluded. They are acquainted with the ordinary operations of agriculture, but in the towns they know nothing of this. They have no idea or wish to know where a potato comes from or how it grows.—Contemporary Review.

Cannon Carved in Rocks. When the island of Malta was in possession of the Templars those knights defended their forts by the use of cannon cut into the solid rock. Each was capable of containing an entire barrel of gunpowder and could throw 10,000 pounds of projectiles. As these natural cannon could not be aimed fifty were cut out of the rock guarding the various channels of approach, and the vessels of that time were unable to approach within their own range before being annihilated by these huge weapons of defense. Although the frame of these cannon was spread far and wide, they were not duplicated elsewhere, and they remain the only rock cannon of which there is any record.

Parliamentary Amendment. Mr. Wood—My honorable friend was loaded this evening. Mr. Norton—Surely the honorable member does not think that I allow any one to load me mentally, morally or physically. I pay for my own stuff and carry the consequences. I do not know what the honorable member means by saying that I am loaded. In the sense to which the honorable member may allude I have not been loaded for three weeks. Therefore I resent the imputation.

The Speaker—The honorable member must discuss the principles of the bill. Mr. Norton—The honorable member for Bega says that I was loaded. Mr. Wood—I did not say it offensive. Mr. Norton—In that case I shall say no more about it. And then the debate resumed its course.—New South Wales Legislative Reports.

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